



H.R. 3682 – California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 3682 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Mary Bono Mack (R-CA) on September 27, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported, as amended, by voice vote by the House Committee on Natural Resources on May 14, 2008.

H.R. 3682 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on June 9, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 3682 designates the following lands in California as wilderness:

- 2,053 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in the Cleveland National Forest, to be part of the Agua Tibia Wilderness;
- 5,585 acres of land in the San Bernardino National Forest to be known as the Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness and the South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness;
- 20,217 acres of land in the San Bernadino National Forest to be known as the South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness;
- 2,149 acres of BLM land in Riverside County, California, to be incorporated in the Santa Rosa Wilderness;
- 15,621 acres of BLM land in Riverside County, California, to be known as the Beauty Mountain Wilderness;
- 36,700 acres of land in Joshua Tree National Park, to be part of the Joshua Tree Wilderness;
- 4,635 acres of BLM land in Riverside County, California as part of the Orocopia Mountains Wilderness;
- 22,645 acres of BLM land in Riverside County, California as part of the Palen/McCoy Wilderness;
- 24,404 acres of BLM land in Riverside County, California to be known as the Pinto Mountains Wilderness; and
- 12,815 acres of BLM land in Riverside County, California as part of the Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness.

The bill states that wilderness areas in the Act are intended to exclude rights of way for existing utility facilities, and associated structures and access roads.

H.R. 3682 designates 43,300 acres of land in the Joshua Tree National Park as potential wilderness. The Secretary of the Interior is required to manage such land as wilderness until it is incorporated into the Joshua Tree Wilderness.

The bill also provides for access to the Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness by Indian tribes for traditional cultural and religious purposes. The Secretary of Interior is directed to amend local fire management plans that apply to the Santa Rosa Wilderness and Agua Tibia Wilderness, and prepare local fire management plans for the Beauty Mountain Wilderness, Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness, and South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness Area.

In addition, H.R. 3682 amends the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542) to designate certain creeks and rivers in Riverside County, California as "wild, scenic, or recreational rivers".

****Note:** (1) *Wild river areas* are rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail. *Scenic river areas* are rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. *Recreational river areas* are rivers or sections of rivers that are readily



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accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. (P.L. 90-542)**

The bill additionally amends the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-351) to include additional lands within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.

BACKGROUND

In total, H.R. 3682 designates approximately 190,000 acres of land in Southern California as wilderness or potential wilderness. Under the Wilderness Act (P.L. 88-577), wilderness is famously defined as “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” Wilderness areas typically provide many recreational activities for Americans, while certain activities such as logging and oil and gas drilling are prohibited.

The National Wilderness Preservation System was established by the Wilderness Act (P.L. 88-577) in 1964. Under the Wilderness Act, Congress may designate federal lands as wilderness. The National Wilderness Preservation System administers federally managed lands encompassing 107 million acres in 702 wilderness areas, as of January 2008.

[National Wilderness Preservation System website](#)

COST

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that implementing H.R. 3682 “would have no significant effect on the federal budget.”

[Full CBO Cost Estimate for H.R. 3682](#)

STAFF CONTACT

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